



Happy Birthday 18th MP Brigade!



The 18th Military Police Brigade celebrates its 39th birthday this month. *(Story on page 4)*

MNF-I Command Sergeant Major pays a visit

CAMP VICTORY, Iraq-

Command Sgt. Maj. Jeffrey Mellinger, the Multi-National Force Iraq CSM, paid a visit to the 18th MP Brigade Headquarters March 3.


Mellinger visited each HQ department shaking hands and speaking with Soldiers. Various Soldiers received a coin from Mellinger for outstanding duty performance. *(cont'd on page 5)*





Brigade Briefs


April Birthdays

01- SFC Jeffery Johnson
 01- SSG John Barnhill
 02- SPC Lamika Fisher
 10- PVT Courtney Townes
 21- CPT Stephen Caruso
 27- SGT Jamey Watson

 Congratulations to SPC Jasbleidick Chancay on her promotion March 23.

 The Brigade will hold an organizational day April 16th at Brigade headquarters. A barbecue is planned with lots of fun activities!

 A record APFT will take place May 2 and May 9 at the Brigade HHC. Good luck everyone!

 Help! We need your submissions for the Brigade Newsletter. Artists, writers, poets, photographers; please help us make this newsletter a success!



Pfc. Aaron (above), Sgt. Blake and Spc. Brooks (below) give it their all as they near the finish of an almost two-mile full combat gear run around "lost lake" as part of the Command Groups commitment to staying in shape.



VIGILANT TIMES

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Spc. Lynne Steely.....Photojournalist

COMMANDERS CORNER

By Col. James B. Brown

Legacy of Excellence and Service

Dear Friends and Families of the 18th Military Police Brigade, As we celebrate the birthday of our great brigade, it is a good time to take an opportunity to reflect on the legacy of our brigade. The Soldiers of our brigade have a well established legacy of excellence in combat that extends from Vietnam through the Balkans to Iraq and Afghanistan today. For 39 years, Soldiers wearing our patch have served the nation. Some have given their lives in the defense of freedom and we mourn and memorialize their deaths as we refuse to forget the true costs of freedom. SSG Shane Koele of the 212th MP Company was tragically killed in a mine strike yesterday in Afghanistan. SPC Jonathan A. Hughes of B/1-623 FA was also killed by an IED strike in Iraq just two days after SSG Koele. Thankfully, God has preserved all the teammates of our two heroes who were injured but miraculously will soon recover. We are blessed to serve in the company of heroes who selflessly commit themselves to rid the world of terror and to defend the freedoms that many of us took for granted as children.

Here in Iraq, Soldiers of the 18th MP brigade continue to make history and live up to the legacy of the Warriors who established the reputation of this great brigade. The Soldiers of the 503d MP Battalion have had a lot of significant contact with the enemy recently. Just yesterday, the 617th MP



Company was shadowing a convoy that was engaged by an ambush of upwards of 50 AIF fighters armed with RPGs and automatic weapons. The Soldiers of the "Raven" Company tenaciously engaged and fought for two hours a close order fight that resulted in numerous enemy Killed in Action and wounded (captured), while suffering three wounded. The junior leaders of this company made all the difference by tenaciously fighting the enemy and leading their Soldiers to victory. Our heroic Soldiers continued to fight even after being injured. When I visit our wounded in the Combat Support Hospital, they continually only have one question, "How are the rest of the guys in my squad?" Another example of the tremendous performance of the Soldiers in our brigade is the fact that CPT Tristan Vasquez was awarded the Bronze Star with Valor for her leadership of a platoon level engagement in combat last August here in Baghdad. Her leadership of Soldiers is now a part of our proud history in battle as well.

Yesterday in Abu Ghraib, another page of history was turned when we transferred 11 detainees from our detention facility to Iraqi Prison where they became Iraqi Prisoners serving out their sentences handed down by the Central Criminal Court of Iraq. Several other detainees have been found innocent of criminal charges and were released from detention as well. The bottom line is that the courts system in Iraq is beginning to function completely and another significant milestone in the development of Iraq has been reached. Much of the credit for this tremendous accomplishment goes to the Soldiers and

Leaders of the 306th MP Battalion.

At Camp Bucca, the Airmen and Soldiers of the 586th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron have done an outstanding job of securing the battle space area around Camp Bucca. The Area Security Patrols of the 586th have discovered several arms caches and possible rocket launching sites that have been neutralized in the continual efforts to improve the security of Camp Bucca. The Soldiers of the 105th MP Battalion inside the Facility recently discovered a large tunnel effort of the detainees to escape as well and continue to provide tremendous care for our detainees while guarding against escapes.

One of the significant developments I see in our force is the amount of time that we spend on leader development. The units of this great brigade continue to study our craft and to focus on learning how to continually improve. Our leaders conference at the Adnan Palace on 11 March where we focused on Standards, Discipline, Leadership is just one example. Yesterday, I sat in on a Leader Development Session in the 306th MP Battalion that was one of the best leader development sessions I have ever participated in.

Every day our Soldiers are making not only a difference in Iraq and Afghanistan, but also in Germany as well. The glue of this organization is commitment to our Army Values, Warrior Ethos and combat disciplines. Thank you for the roll that you play in supporting our Soldiers and families as we fight to win the war on terror.

EVER VIGILANT!

Col. Jim Brown, VIGILANT 6

Continuing the Tradition

By Spc. Lynne Steely

Currently deployed to Iraq for a second time, the Soldiers of the 18th Military Police Brigade continue the fight against the Global War on Terrorism. The 18th, now with 39 years of Military Police history behind it, carries on the legacy of what began on that spring day back in 1966.

After being constituted into the Regular Army on March 23, 1966, the Brigade hit the ground in Vung Tau, Republic of Vietnam that same Autumn. Upon its arrival, it was given total responsibility for the command, coordination and control of all Military Police operations, including all non-divisional MP units from the demilitarized zone to the Mekong Delta. By the peak of the war, the brigade would grow to over six thousand military policemen assigned to three MP groups; The 8th, 16th and 89th.

Aside from maintaining law and order, the Brigade also conducted a variety of other missions including convoy escorts, bridge and highway security, detainee evacuation, traffic control and port and

dier, recalls the time he spent attached to the Brigade while assigned to the 300th MP Company based in Di-An, Vietnam in 1970. At that time the mission of the 300th included security at the docks of

Newport securing warehouses and shipping docks, and inspecting cargo trucks entering and exiting the port in Saigon. Their counterparts, the 458th Transportation Company (PBR), was in charge of

harbor patrol, journeying up and down the Saigon in river patrol boats equipped with .50-caliber machine guns. When they needed a few extra MPs to assist with patrols, Ross considered himself fortunate to be chosen.

“If one can compare standing in front of a

warehouse to cruising the Saigon River in a high-performance patrol boat,” recalled Ross, “I favor the cruise!” His stay with the 458th was short, however, and Ross soon



18th MP soldiers conduct security patrols on a river patrol boat in Vietnam.

river security. At this time, the military police became actively involved in direct support of combat operations. Andrew Ross, a Vietnam veteran and former 18th Sol-

returned to the 300th and into the middle of a major offensive to cut off the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos. The company went on red alert and began receiving equipment from other companies within the 18th, remembered Ross, including weapons, jeeps, convoy escort vehicles, deuce and a halves, and an influx of MPs to bring their unit up to strength.

The Brigades shining moment came during the TET Offensive of 1968 when the MPs replaced their shiny black helmets for bush hats, becoming more involved in combat operations. The 716th MP Battalion was principle in defeating the Viet Cong attack against Saigon and the U.S. Embassy.

The 18th Military Police Brigade took part in ten campaigns during the Vietnam War and was awarded four meritorious unit



commendations and streamers. It was also awarded the Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm for its outstanding service and was the last major color-bearing unit to leave Vietnam in early 1973. Since 1990, the Brigade has deployed to several other areas of the world including The Balkans

Albania, Yugoslavia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Sarajevo, and Kosovo.

After nearly four decades, the Soldiers of the 18th Military Police Brigade continue the legacy of these brave and courageous men and women that went before us and are making their mark in history once again.



Brigade soldiers in a V-100 Commando armored car first introduced during the Vietnam War.

Mellinger spent three days visiting various elements of the Brigade including the HHC, the 503d, 306th and 105th MP Battalions, and the 65th MP Company.

Mellinger was briefed on the status of each unit and what improvements have been or could be made in the future.

He spent a great deal of time with the Soldiers one on one either at meal time or on the job to let them know just how important what



MNF-I Coin presented to Soldiers by Mellinger.

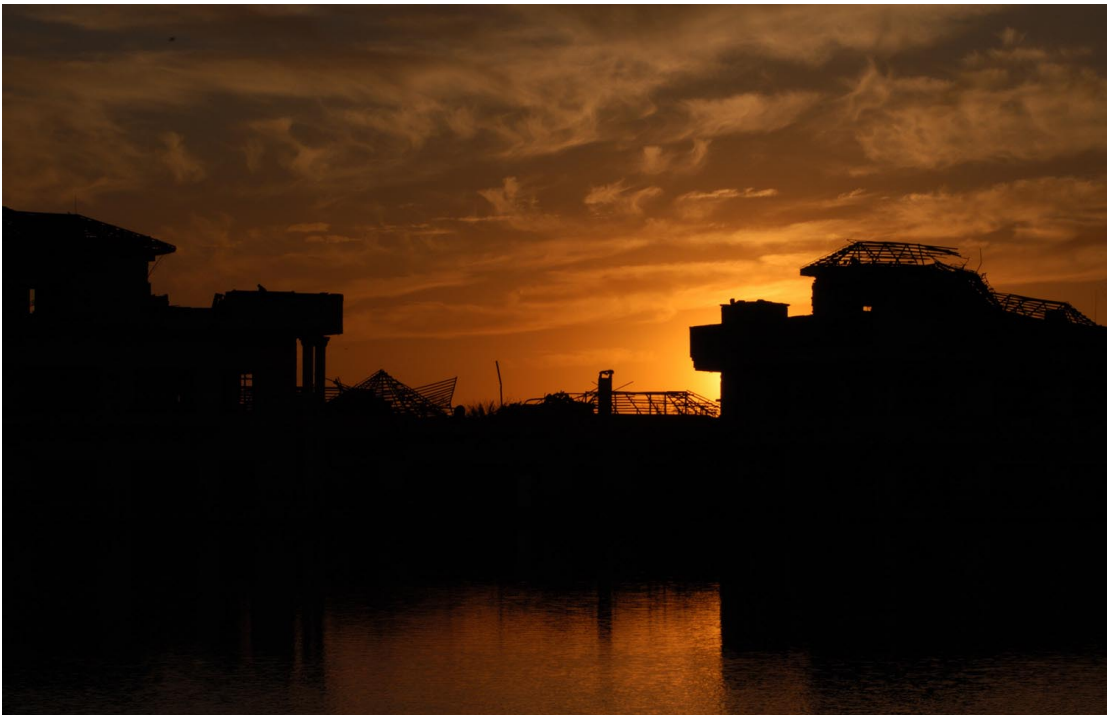
they're doing really is and gave them an opportunity to voice any questions or concerns they may have had on their mind.



Mellinger visits with Soldiers of the 503d MP Battalion during his three-day trip. "Be proud of what you are," he told them.

Around Camp Victory





IRAQ FACTS

Climate - The mean January temperature in Baghdad, which is in the central lowland portion of the country, is 50 degrees, and in July, 95 degrees. Temperatures of up to 123 degrees have been recorded.

Natural Resources - Iraq's natural resources are primarily mineral. The country has large amounts of petroleum and natural gas. It has large quantities of water supplied by the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.

Wildlife - Some of the wildlife found in Iraq include the cheetah, gazelle, antelope, hyena, wild pig, jackal, wolf and the bat. Native birds of prey include the vulture, buzzard, raven, owl

and various species of hawk. Lizards are also very common.

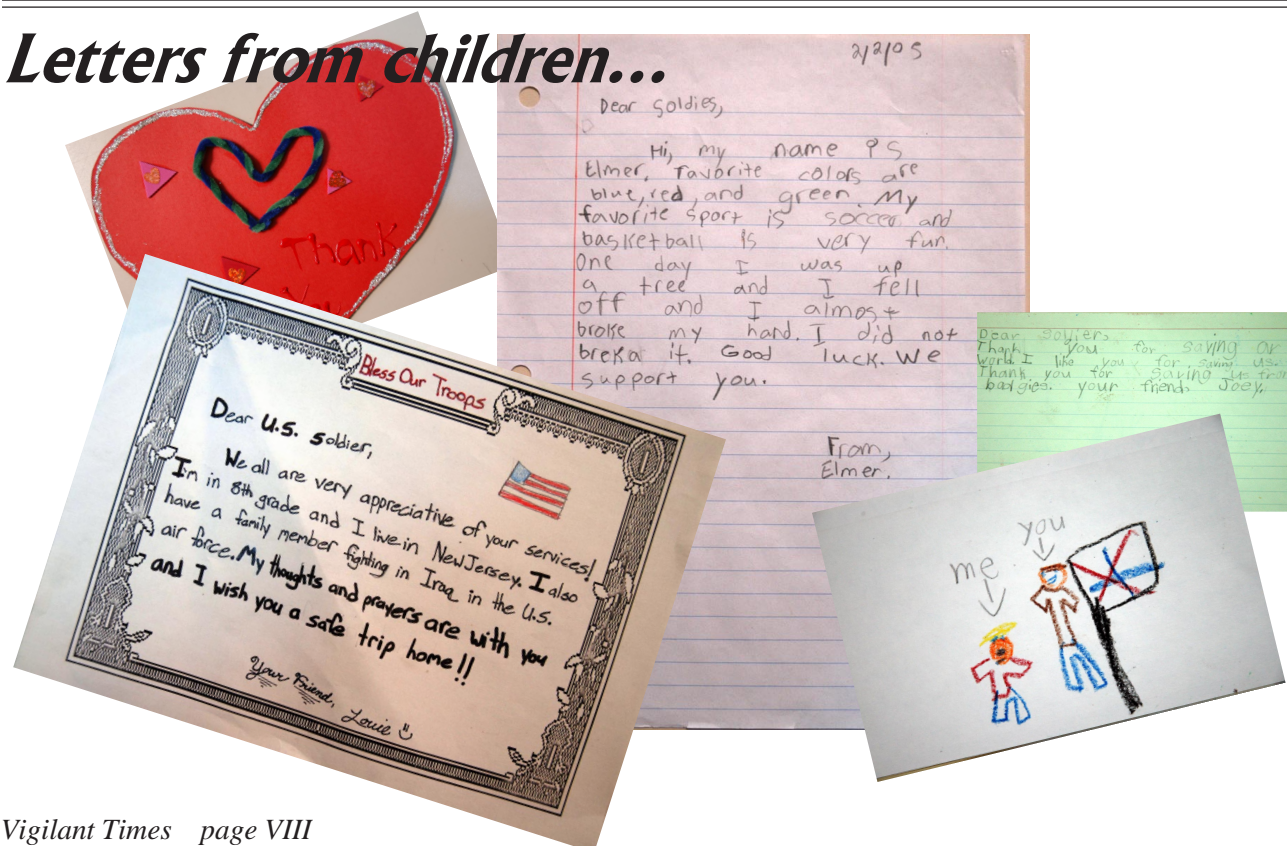
Vegetation - Vegetation is sparse throughout Iraq. The southern, southwestern and western portions of Iraq are desert areas. There are few trees except for the cultivated date palms and poplar.

Principal Cities - Baghdad is the capital and largest city of Iraq. Other major cities include Al Basrah, the main port, located on the Shatt al Arab, and Mosul, or Al Mawsil, an oil center in the north.

Ethnic Groups - About 75 percent of Iraq is Arab. Kurds, dwelling in the highlands of northern Iraq, make up 15 to 20 percent of the population. Other groups include Turkmens, Jews, Armenians and Assyrians.

("Iraq," Microsoft® Encarta® Online Encyclopedia 2005)

Letters from children...



CONNECTIONS

By Lt. Col. Thomas Evans



Iraq offers a new look at almost everything. The people dress differently, they conduct themselves differently than we do; this nation gives you the opportunity to re-discover familiar things with a totally new impression of them.

Take driving for example. We drive on the right side of the road. If we ever see anybody on the wrong side of the road we expect them to be intoxicated or disoriented, or even criminal. In Iraq, if the right lanes of the freeway are moving too slowly, we routinely see people cross the median and drive in the left lanes of the freeway so they can drive faster than in the right lanes. When oncoming traffic comes, they just move to one side or the other, and everybody just passes them by. It is just a different set of driving standards.



When we arrived in Iraq, reservoirs and canals on Camp Victory were surrounded by giant reeds. That too was different. I haven't seen reeds like these before. Because it was winter time, all the reeds were brown and dry, but they stood tall and waved in the breeze, until laborers recently came through with their machetes and chopped them down.

Now that March is here, I am amazed at the new growth of reeds sprouting up. It seems that nature in Iraq announces that it is Springtime by a new crop of bright green reeds. With the rains we have had recently, this new life is bursting out of the ground, and seems to be growing by the hour rather than by the day.

It helps me rediscover another familiar lesson. The old has died, and was even cut to the ground, but the new is bursting with new life. On Good Friday, Jesus himself was cut down in the prime of His life, nailed to the cross, and pierced with a spear. But from His death, and from His grave, He burst forth in New Life. Hallelujah, it is the Easter Good News discovered again. As we open our hearts to His Life, New Life grows in us, by the hour, changing who we are, and how we think, and how we behave.

Happy Easter. Let Jesus, and His resurrection power live in you and change who you are. Let Him change how you see other people. The people driving on the "wrong" side of your road...maybe they aren't criminals, maybe you just need to let them know it is Eastertime, and it is time for a New Life to begin in their heart too.

"For as the soil makes the sprout come up and a garden causes seeds to grow, so the Sovereign LORD will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations."

Isaiah 61:11 (NIV)



HAPPY EASTER

We all know the religious significance behind the Easter holiday season, but where do all those other Easter traditions come from?

Many of our modern day Easter customs actually pre-date Christianity.

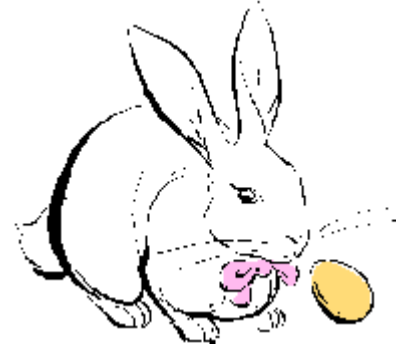
The Easter egg as we know it began as part of a spring celebration and fertility ritual of many pre-Christian and Indo-European people. The eggs were colored brightly by the Egyptians and the Persians to signify the beginning of spring.

Today, we enjoy creating unique and colorful eggs to be used in games such as the ever-popular

Easter egg hunt and the annual egg rolling contest held on the White House lawn. Many children love to receive eggs from the Easter bunny.

The Easter bunny has become just as much a part of our tradition as the egg. In ancient times, however, the rabbit was a symbol of fertility and new life. The Easter rabbit also has strong roots in European folklore.

In the United States, wearing new clothes for Easter is a popular custom. In New York City, many people like to display their fancy attire in the Easter Parade on Fifth Avenue. Unknown to many, this custom originated hundreds



of years ago within the church. Those who were baptized on Holy Saturday were given new white robes to wear.

Easter falls on a Sunday between March 22 and April 25 depending on the lunar calendar. It is preceded by Lent which begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Saturday, which immediately precedes Easter Sunday.

Saint Patrick's Day

For the Irish, St. Patrick's Day is a religious holiday as well as a day for spiritual renewal and prayer offerings for missionaries worldwide.

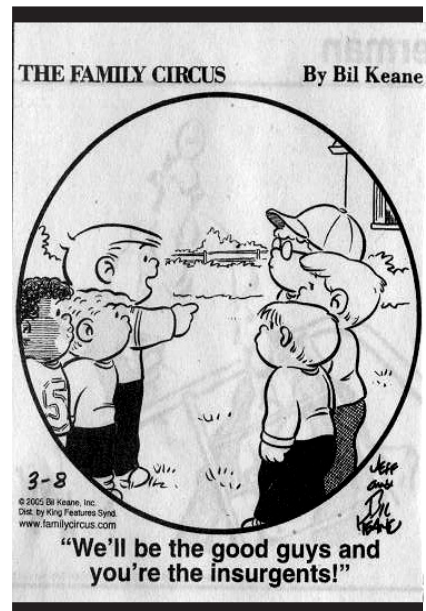
St. Patrick was the national apostle of Ireland, credited with bringing Christianity to Ireland.



patron saint and Ireland, Christianity to

It is believed that Saint Patrick died on March, 17, 460 A.D., thus, St. Patrick's Day.

St. Patrick's Day has become quite a tradition in America, significantly celebrated in cities and towns with a large Irish population. Popular festivities include parades, "wearing of the green", song and dance, Irish food and drink, and don't forget the green beer.



TIDBITS

Financial Insider

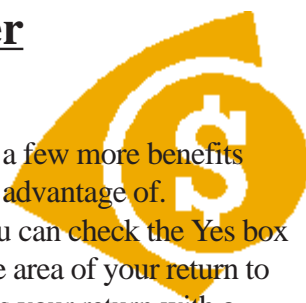
More tax advantages-

As tax time nears, here are a few more benefits military members can take advantage of.

Third party designee- You can check the Yes box in the Third Party Designee area of your return to authorize the IRS to discuss your return with a friend, family member, or any other person you choose. It also allows your designee to perform certain actions.

Earned Income Credit- You can now elect to have your nontaxable combat pay included in earned income for the earned income credit. The maximum amount of income you can earn and still claim the credit has increased.

Standard mileage rate- The standard mileage rate for the cost of operating your car for business increased to 37.5 cents a mile. The mileage rate to get medical care or to move has increased to 14 cents a mile.



Websites

Show your support!

You can sign a petition online to show your support for the troops. Go to:

[www.petitions.com/campaigns/
Support Our Troops](http://www.petitions.com/campaigns/Support_Our_Troops)

Honor and pay tribute to our fallen heroes at:

www.fallenheroesmemorial.com



Legal Tips

Looking out for you-

The Armed Forces Disciplinary Control Board is an investigative committee that seeks to protect the interests and welfare of servicemembers when off post. Their purpose is to prevent unfair and criminal practices against military personnel by disreputable businesses.

You can report this and any other conditions detrimental to your health, safety or morale to the AFDCB. Examples include unsafe and unsanitary apartment conditions, or drug trafficking at an off-post bar.

If the situation cannot be rectified following an investigation, the business may be placed off-limits to protect you and other military members.

Check with your chain of command or legal assistance office if you want to submit a complaint to the AFDCB.



Get the Scoop straight from the White House

www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/iraq

More websites to check out

www.americasupportsyou.mil

www.sgtmoms.com

www.appreciateourtroops.org

www.operationhomelink.org

www.heromiles.org

